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5 June 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: SE-30: Probable Soviet Courses of Action with Respect to Berlin through Mid-1953

1. In accordance with your instructions, this estimate has been drafted in the form of short summary conclusions, with minimum statements of supporting reasons.
2. Paragraph 6 gives the basic conclusion of the estimate on the likelihood of a complete surface blockade of Berlin in the period through mid-1953. The draft attempts to convey to a policy-maker the view that while the odds of such a blockade now appear to be less than even throughout this period, they may change rapidly at any time.
3. In the following paragraphs 7 and 8, the estimate considers the likelihood and probable severity of Communist pressures short of a surface blockade. The draft refers to the likelihood of increased severity if the USSR elects to build up the East German government (GDR). It does not, however, attempt to assess the likelihood and degree of such buildup, on the grounds that this is broader than the scope of the estimate.
4. State has attached a dissent to the whole of the paper. The Board believes that in the present paragraphs 6 - 8, the estimate sufficiently flags the possibility that the odds on blockade may change and that increasingly severe measures short of blockade are likely. State, however, believes that the Kremlin (a) has substantially abandoned hope of preventing or delaying West German rearmament — or at least thinks that any remaining hope of doing this can be realized by strong pressures rather than by "carrot" tactics; (b) is not affected by concern for grave risks of general war to the degree indicated in the draft. On these fundamental points, the Board and the other agencies (with the possible exception of G-2) have concluded after considerable discussion, that the views expressed in the draft, which are the same as in recent estimates on Germany (WIE-53 particularly), are still sound. State also wishes to call more detailed attention to the possible use and consequences of extreme harassing measures by the GDR.

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5. G-2's representative indicated that while the present draft went far toward meeting their views -- which incline in the same direction as State's but not so far -- G-2 might propose further revision or elect to dissent on one or more points. We do not know what they may propose.

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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